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Appn. No. : 10/538,976
Filing Date : December 5, 2005
Page 2 of 8

Amendment to the Claims:

Please cancel Claim 28 without prejudice or disclaimer, and amend Claim 8 as set forth below.

1-7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently amended) A process for preparing a ~~modified~~ hemoglobin molecule (Hb) modified to have six \pm one polyethylene glycol (PEG) chains, comprising the steps of:

- (a) reacting Hb with 8-15 fold excess of iminothiolane to form thiolated Hb; and
- (b) reacting the thiolated Hb with 16-30 fold excess of PEG ~~polyethylene glycol (PEG)~~ functionalized with a maleimide moiety, to form the modified Hb having six \pm one PEG chains.

9. (Original) The process of Claim 8, wherein Hb is reacted with 9-12 fold excess iminothiolane in step (a).

10. (Original) The process of Claim 8, wherein Hb is reacted with about 10 fold excess iminothiolane in step (a).

11. (Original) The process of Claim 8, wherein the thiolated Hb is reacted with 18-22 fold excess PEG functionalized with a maleimide moiety in step (b).

12. (Original) The process of Claim 8, wherein the thiolated Hb is reacted with about 20 fold excess PEG functionalized with a maleimide moiety in step (b).

Applicants : Seetharama A. Acharya and Belur N. Manjula
Appn. No. : 10/538,976
Filing Date : December 5, 2005
Page 3 of 8

13. (Original) The process of Claim 8, wherein Hb is reacted with 9-12 fold excess iminothiolane in step (a), and the thiolated Hb is reacted with 18-22 fold excess PEG functionalized with a maleimide moiety in step (b).

14. (Original) The process of Claim 8, wherein Hb is reacted with 9-12 fold excess iminothiolane in step (a), and the thiolated Hb is reacted with about 20 fold excess PEG functionalized with a maleimide moiety in step (b).

15. (Original) The process of Claim 8, wherein Hb is reacted with about 10 fold excess iminothiolane in step (a), and the thiolated Hb is reacted with 18-22 fold excess PEG functionalized with a maleimide moiety in step (b).

16. (Original) The process of Claim 8, wherein Hb is reacted with about 10 fold excess iminothiolane in step (a), and the thiolated Hb is reacted with about 20 fold excess PEG functionalized with a maleimide moiety in step (b).

17. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 8, wherein PEG has a molecular weight of 3000-10,000 daltons.

18. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 8, wherein PEG has a molecular weight of about 5,000 daltons.

19. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 8, wherein the modified Hb does not produce hypertension in a subject.

20. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 17, wherein the modified Hb does not produce hypertension in a subject.

Applicants : Seetharama A. Acharya and Belur N. Manjula
Appn. No. : 10/538,976
Filing Date : December 5, 2005
Page 4 of 8

21. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 18, wherein the modified Hb does not produce hypertension in a subject.

22-28. (Canceled)